

WANDERERS END

20/05/75

SEASON
IN STYLE

By STUART EARP Wycombe 4, Rest of League XI 3

WYCOMBE WANDERERS finished the season in majestic style on Tuesday night at Loakes Park. They were trailing 0-2 in their match against the Rest of the League — a game held over from last season — but then snapped back to win a thrilling encounter 4-3.

Until half-time, this annual match between the champions and the Rest looked like becoming a non-event. Wanderers had struggled throughout the first 45 minutes and found themselves two down soon into the second half. Then the fireworks started. Dylan Evans, Graham Mackenzie, Dave Bullock and finally skipper Alan Phillips all found the target to give the Blues an amazing 4-3 triumph.

The second half performance personified Wycombe's football this season. They raised their game out of all proportion and produced some super attacking play which proved too much for the talented league XI. It also emphasised the club's strength in depth. Young Mackenzie had a marvellous 90 minutes, while Paul Griffiths turned in his usual hard working performance. Bullock, an onlooker for much of the season, was justly rewarded for his loyalty with his headed goal.

The fans who came along to witness the presentation of the championship trophy before the game were treated to a feast of attacking football in glorious conditions. It just couldn't have been a better finale.

Wanderers gave every member of their title-winning squad a run out, but in the first half, they just couldn't get going. John Maskell was kept busy by the League strikers and conceded the first goal after 20 minutes. As a cross came over from the right, the 'keeper and Griffiths hesitated for a second and as the ball bounced up, Hitchin's top goalscorer Howard Kettleborough nodded the ball high into the net.

That goal gave the League XI even more confidence and they began to dictate events, spraying some neat passes across the field. Wycombe, unable to gain possession, could do nothing to alter the pattern of the game.

TURNED TIDE

The introduction of four substitutes at half time eventually turned the tide for the Blues but not before Trevor Blaydon and John Knapman had combined well to set up a chance for Alec Jackson to slip the ball past a helpless Maskell a minute into the second half.

That second goal spurred Wycombe into life. Ray Eaton headed off the line from Phillips and then the Blues pulled one back in the 69th minute. Bullock's free kick was cleared to Keith Searle who headed across the box for Dylan Evans to race in to lob a header over Dave Collyer.

Cheered on by another large crowd, Wanderers turned on the pressure in style. Horseman, Kennedy and Searle all had shots blocked in an amazing goalmouth scramble which was ended by Dave Alexander's fierce drive — off the crossbar. Unfortunately the goal was disallowed for off-side. It scarcely mattered. Within four minutes Wycombe had levelled the score. Collyer, the Woking goalkeeper who has had many fine games at Loakes Park, misjudged Horseman's corner and Bullock headed a simple header into the back of the net.

With Evans and Searle play-

ing like demons upfront, the League XI took a back seat as Wanderers produced some of the best football of the season — what a difference from Saturdays championship winning game against Dagenham. The pressure was off and both sides were able to concentrate on pure, attacking football. It was a joy to watch.

In the 79th minute Mackenzie scored a brilliant goal from another Horseman corner. 'Bodger' curled the ball low to the near post where Mackenzie dived in amongst the flying boots to head home past Collyer. That made it 3-2, but within 20 seconds the League were back on level terms.

From the re-start of Mackenzie's goal, the ball was slipped through to Knapman. Still some 30 yards from goal he let fly with a stinging drive that simply rocketed into the net with Maskell powerless to move — let alone stop it.

As a final substitution, Bullock took over from Maskell in goal with a few minutes to go, 'Mask' receiving a thoroughly deserved round of applause from the crowd.

The fourth and final goal came just six minutes from time. Keith Mead drove a free kick deep into the box where the defence only half cleared. Phillips was quick to pounce on the loose ball and turned nicely to crack a shot past Collyer. Even that wasn't the end of the excitement. Keith Searle, who has had a marvellous season, found himself clean through in the last minute but saw his low

drive cannon against the upright.

The players were given a great ovation by the crowd at the end of the match for one of the most entertaining games at the ground for a long time.

PRESENTATION

Before the start, Mr. Frank Wilson, a vice-president and former secretary of the Isthmian League, presented the trophy and championship flag to skipper Alan Phillips. After welcoming club chairman Jack Smethurst he said: "It is good to see Wycombe Wanderers at the top of the league again. They have played some wonderful football this season and they have a wonderful sportsmanship record."

After the presentation, the players paid their tribute to their supporters with a lap of honour around the ground applauding their fans who had helped them in their fourth title in five years.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Griffiths (sub P. Birdseye 45 mins); K. Mead (sub A. Phillips 45 mins); D. Bullock, G. Hand; H. Kennedy (sub M. Hollifield 70 mins); T. Reardon (sub D. Alexander 45 mins); G. Mackenzie; A. Horseman, K. Searle, S. Perrin (sub D. Evans 45 mins).

R.I.L. XI: D. Collyer (Woking); L. Rayner (Leytonstone — sub A. Jennings Enfield 45 mins); D. Lawrence (Bishop's Stortford); M. Preston (Sutton); R. Eaton (Ilford); T. Blaydon (Dulwich); W. Smith (Leatherhead); P. McGillicuddy (Leatherhead — sub J. Knapman Walthamstow 45 mins); J. Baker (Dulwich); H. Kettleborough (Hitchin); A. Jackson (Dulwich).

Referee: A. Barnes (Middlesex F.A.)

Half time: 0-1. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Evans (69), Bullock (71), Mackenzie (79), Phillips (84); R.I.L. — Kettleborough (20), Jackson (46), Knapman (79).

Official paying attendance: 1,650. **Approximate total attendance:** 2,100.